



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE

DIRK KEMPTHORNE – Governor
KARL B. KURTZ – Director

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
450 West State Street, 10th Floor
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0036
PHONE 208-334-5625
FAX 208-334-5926

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 30, 2004

Ross Mason
(208) 869-1751

OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIOD BEGINS SEPTEMBER 1 FOR LOW COST CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Working families have another opportunity to enroll their children in low cost health insurance beginning September 1. The open enrollment period for the Access Card/CHIP B health insurance plans will last through September 14.

“We still have room for more than 4,000 children in these health insurance programs, so we are encouraging parents to take advantage of this opportunity if they think they qualify,” says Terry Higbee, program supervisor. “Access Card and CHIP B are programs for working families who currently don’t have health insurance for their children and meet income and asset qualifications. An uninsured family of four could make almost \$35,000 annually and qualify for either program.

The Access Card/CHIP B programs began in July, but many families who qualified financially already had insurance. Other families who applied were eligible for regular Medicaid health insurance programs so the new programs were left with more openings than expected.

Parents may apply for Access Card/CHIP B during the open enrollment period of September 1-14. The application must be postmarked or received within that two week time period.

“It’s really important that people take advantage of this open enrollment if they think they qualify. We don’t know when the next open enrollment will be, so the sooner you act the more likely you are to get your children insured,” says Higbee. “Even if you applied before and were denied, we encourage people to apply again if they believe their situation is different. We know that incomes change, company policies change and people sometimes lose their insurance. The important thing is that children get the

health insurance they need. However, we also don't want people dropping health insurance to get one of these new programs. Access Card and CHIP B are for people who currently don't have health insurance."

The Access Card is a premium assistance program for families who prefer to obtain health coverage through a private insurance company or through their employer. Income can be up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. A family using the Access Card receives up to \$100 per child per month (maximum of \$300 per family) to help purchase insurance.

CHIP B is low cost health coverage for Idaho children who don't have insurance and don't qualify for Idaho Medicaid or CHIP A. Income can be up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. CHIP B costs \$15 per child each month. Children up to age 19 may be included in coverage.

Families interested in signing up for the insurance can obtain an application or additional information by calling the Idaho Careline at 2-1-1 or 1-800-926-2588, or by going to this website: www.idahohealth.org. Parents may also contact the CHIP Unit directly at 1-866-326-2485 toll free.

(Editors: For additional information contact Ross Mason in Boise at 869-1751)